

# **FACING 12 YEARS IN FLORIDA FOR ABORTION GRAFFITI**



**THE FINAL STRAW RADIO  
APRIL 24, 2023**



We chat with two members of the South Florida Anti-Repression Committee doing solidarity for the 4 queer activists facing up to 12 years in Federal prison on charges related to graffiti at a Pregnancy Crisis Center, aka a building funded by church and state to dissuade people from getting abortions. The Department of Justice is charging them under the FACE Act, a criminal law passed in the 1990's to stop threats, violence and blockades against health clinics that offered like abortions, screenings, contraception and other services under attack by religious extremists in the USA. There are also Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation, known also as SLAPP suits being brought by a Miami-based Christian anti-abortion Crisis Pregnancy Center called Heartbeat of Miami as well as the state of Florida against the accused apparently intended to have a chilling effect and minimize their ability to defend themselves against the Federal indictments.

Oso and Hunter of SFLARC talk about the arrests, about the defendants and the rising tide of gender fascism and war on bodily autonomy in DeSantis' Florida and around the country.

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**TFSR:** Would you please introduce yourselves to the audience with whatever names, pronouns, any affiliations or location that makes sense for this conversation for the audience?

**Oso:** So I'm Oso, I go by they/them. I live and have lived in South Florida my entire life, live and breathe Miami Dade, South Florida, all of that. I am also part of the South Florida Anti-Repression Committee and am actively working on bringing awareness and working on supporting our comrades during this time.

**Hunter:** Hello, my name is Hunter, she/her pronouns. I'm also part of the Anti-Repression Committee and I try to bring awareness to and support to our friends.

**TFSR:** Awesome. Thank you both so much for taking the time to do this. So obviously, the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* happened at a Federal level with the US Supreme Court and has had huge repercussions across the country for tons of people. But Florida under Governor DeSantis has also been at the vanguard of reactionary culture wars, on education as well as reproductive and LGBTQIA rights, and notably among youth. Can you talk a bit about the political climate in South Florida, and what communities are most put at risk by these political developments and sort of how people are standing up

**Oso:** So South Florida... They always talk about how South Florida is probably a part or just as much a part of Latin America as the rest of the legitimate Latin America. And if you look at census data from July 2021, 69% of Miami-Dade County is Hispanic or Latino. If you compare that to census data from the same time, showing that only about a quarter of Floridians are Hispanic or Latino. So, it just goes to show the demographic down here, how concentrated it is with Latinos and all that. You're going to get a lot of mixed politics with the amount of immigrants in the area. And just in the city, the mixed races and all that, it's...I hate using the word "melting pot", but that's what everyone likes to call it. I wish there was a better word for it.

But, when you have this many people, when it comes to immigrants in South Florida, a lot of these people are displaced from Central America, Cuba or destabilize countries due to [sarcastically] the most wonderful country in the world, the United States of America. You'll get a lot of conflicting feelings in terms of politics, such as socialism, communism, any type of leftist politics in general. You're going to get a lot of conservatives who buy into the conservative propaganda, the Republican propaganda, and they believe that the United States are saviors, and they're gonna save them from the dirty communists, the dictators. They have no idea that it was actually the United States destabilizing these countries themselves, that this country is the whole reason that they're here.

While you do have a lot of conservatism in this area of South Florida,



you're going to still get a lot of leftist, especially within the younger generation. For example, in FIU they have a very strong YDSA [Youth Democratic Socialists of America] chapter. They actually just organize a massive walkout that happened yesterday against how DeSantis has been wreaking havoc on the educational system, especially with higher education with removing critical race theory and just banning certain books and banning entire topics of discussion and classes altogether. It's a mix of everything. It gets hard to really talk about these kinds of things. You never know who's going to be on one side here.

**Hunter:** Miami is kind of joked about as being part of Latin America because of just how highly concentrated the Spanish speaking Latino and brown population is down here. So, like Oso was saying, you really do get that big mix of people coming from... Well, all of them being immigrants, immigrant families, first generation or second generation with second generation kids, just growing up in a country completely different from any of their ancestors and their Indian parents. And you do get this mixed bag of people from different countries all coming into like a so-called melting pot. And in particular, as they were saying you also get a lot of Cubans or Venezuelans Nicaraguans coming from countries that supposedly have you, as they call "actually existing socialism," a description that I think we would both disagree on for those countries, which results in anti-communist like thinking down here. On Calle Ocho [a famous street in Miami] there were a place with high Cuban concentration demographics, there was a lot of like marches or maybe caravans and support for Donald Trump's campaign. And you saw a lot of that in the media. A lot of coverage for this like, "Okay, why is the Latino bloc supporting the conservatives in this area?" type of discussion more broadly around Florida.

The political climate right now not just on the side of groups that are trying to the resisting but on the fact that the scope, the state government itself is turning more and more towards gender fascism. As governor DeSantis, a name which more the listeners might be familiar with, is very much believed to be working on a presidential campaign, even if he hasn't announced that yet, by really going hard on a culture war against what the mainstream Conservative Party now would call "woke ism." Something that is so nebulously defined, every time that a DeSantis official tries to define it, it gets made fun of online. And a lot of book-bannings and withering away at education, like Oso was starting to get at both in college and in pre-college education is this witch hunt against "critical race theory", CRT, that's become a buzzword now. And DeSantis loves to use the "woke-ism" term in order to try and get rid of any sort of historical education that would imply that the United States has systemic injustices. I don't have his exact definition but that's close to what the definition that they tried to give was. And so if you try and outlaw believing that the government of the United States has systemic injustice, you're basically trying to outlaw any radical critique that tries to get to the root of problems.

And when I say gender fascism, I'm talking about things like the legal ban that just passed, which DeSantis signed, trying to outlaw abortions past six weeks.



Also, the heavy attempts at also withering away transgender rights, because the war against transgender healthcare and the war against woman's health care (not that those things are necessarily different things) in general is exactly the same war that's being waged by gender fascist right now.

**TFSR:** Yeah, I think those are really good points that the both of you brought up. I appreciate the use of the term "gender fascism", this sort of Christian-based — although it doesn't have to be Christian — view of gender as essential of certain definitions of what is the natural use for sex? What people should be educated about sex? This has been a part of the reactionary political landscape that's been pushed, since the foundation of the United States anyway, but definitely it's had such a reaction in the last decade. It's pretty incredible. And I know that besides the immigrant populations that have been moving for various reasons to Florida — whether because they have existing ties there, or because it suits their political needs or whatever — I know that conservative Christian reactionaries from across the United States, and probably just reactionaries in general, have also been moving to the state because they've liked what they're seeing with DeSantis' choices. Which really, it seems like it creates an even harder position for people that have grown up and are living there and maybe don't have the ability or the desire to leave the area. I don't know.

**Would you all mind talking a little bit about the South Florida Anti-Repression Committee, and maybe give a brief introduction to the circumstances that the SFLARC formed in response to?**

**Oso:** The South Florida Anti-Repression Committee was formed in response to the first two indictments of long term organizers and comrades, Caleb Freestone and Amber Smith-Stuart. Towards early February I believe, Amber was raided and Caleb was forced to turn himself in to federal jail, basically. It was all happening pretty much simultaneously on the same morning. They were given these orders of no contact list,

We started up the committee in response to them, because we weren't just going to leave them in the dust and let them figure this out on their own. This is a collective struggle. They've been longtime comrades of ours. It's just appalling how severely they're getting punished for doing graffiti on a building that was empty at the time, no one was hurt. Being faced with 12 years in prison, in federal prison, is just completely ludicrous. We all banded together and created the committee to bring awareness to what's going on, raise funds, and just let everybody know what's been going on, how the state is retaliating.

This is something that's happening under Biden's administration. It is just showing how all of this is ridiculous and how the Democrats don't care, they have never cared about protecting our rights. The fact that they're using the FACE Act [Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrance's Act] in such a way to protect a quote



unquote, “crisis pregnancy center”, which we all know [CPCs] do not provide any type of substantial prenatal health care. The FACE Act was created to protect clinics that do offer substantial health care for prenatal [care] or any type of abortion [care].

We’ve seen time and time again Planned Parenthood’s being attacked, people posting up in front of these abortion clinics or places where people allegedly provide abortion care. And sometimes they don’t even do that in some of those Planned Parenthood locations. So, the fact that these people who will go and harass people go unpunished, but our comrades are facing this much jail time over some graffiti that didn’t hurt anybody is insane. We’re trying to be the point of contact for anybody who wants to know more about this case, issuing press releases, providing support to them, collecting funds for legal defense, trying to get expert witnesses and just blow this up.

**TFSR:** Well, I had a couple clarifications just to flush it out. So, two people were indicted, one person had their house broken into by federal agents, I’m imagining, and then the other person turned themselves in response to after-hours graffiti on a “crisis pregnancy center”.

As Oso brought up, the background of the FACE Act lies in a time when national news coverage had frequent stories of clinic employees and doctors being assassinated by reactionaries across the United States. Places that were thought to facilitate abortions — as Oso said, not all, for instance Planned Parenthood’s actually provide abortions there but when they do it’s such a small proportion of the services that they offer anyway — were violently barricaded, or shot at or firebombed. I’m using a past tense for this, which is maybe incorrect, but it was much more in the media, I think at the time, because people were raising a ruckus about it than it is now that that violence obviously continues.

**Hunter:** Yeah, violence has become a lot more normalized, people kind of just now note that “oh, there’s another shooting” compared to how it was approached back then as aberrant.

**TFSR:** Yeah, for sure. I mean, you can say, like, with all the mass shootings anyway, everywhere.

So while the tensions around the issue have never gone away, the Dobbs decision certainly has brought some of the divisions back into a sharper contrast and emboldened the anti-abortion groups. Could you talk a little bit more about what these CPCs [crisis pregnancy centers] do? I know that here in Asheville we had an independent abortion clinic that faced pretty constant and consistent protests. The Catholic church bought up some buildings, like, surrounding it basically, and would have regular protests out front and had a CPC just down the street from it. If you could



**talk about the honeypot nature of CPCs and a little bit more about what you think about the application of the FACE Act to this specific law, to this incidence?**

**Hunter:** I'd like to start that off. So I was discussing with a friend of mine, the existence of CPCs. And he mentioned how, when he'd gotten pregnant, he couldn't afford to use any of the actual health care centers around him. That, , the ones that were actually subject to HIPAA and required to maintain client confidentiality, which CPCs are not. They're not subject to HIPAA, or required to maintain client confidentiality. He did this because it was a cheaper alternative and he was working class and couldn't afford quality health care. So he went to a CPC and they gave him some resources for his pregnancy.

And we can start off by the predatory nature of CPCs through the private funding that they receive. They outnumber actual abortion providing clinics around Florida, I think, three to one or four to one. But according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, staff members at these unregulated and, honestly, not-really-medical-facilities, have no legal obligation to provide pregnant people with accurate information. They are more than likely involved with some sort of church that is going to inject religion into this already stressful, life-changing, and possibly even traumatic life events that is happening to this woman and other pregnant people who have to go to these clinics, sometimes even fully knowing that they are going to get a very biased and reactionary point of view when they go. But not everybody who does go to CPCs will know what they're in for, know that they're about to get actually pressured out of any abortion medicine and out of any plan B type of healthcare. And I'll let Oso take the mic.

**Oso:** Yes. Just as Hunter said, these CPCs aren't required to abide by HIPAA laws, so why should they be considered healthcare clinics under the FACE Act? It's ridiculous that the narrative has been shifted towards CPCs instead of towards actual health care clinics. It's no surprise there, obviously, given what has happened with the Dobb's decision, and whatnot. But it does come as a shock how all of this has happened so quickly. It's been escalating extremely quickly, you can just tell that they're trying to make an example out of anyone and everyone that they can in this situation, I don't know, Hunter do you wanna add something?

**Hunter:** I did. So earlier, I had mentioned the fact that Governor DeSantis signed into law the abortion ban that would effectively ban abortion past six weeks of pregnancy. And I think that part of that signing is also going to involve almost sextupling the funding that the government gives to crisis pregnancy centers, from \$4 million dollars to \$25 million, if I remember correctly. And once again the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists is reiterating some of the misleading practices that CPC staff uses including asserting false risks to abortion, like stating that there's correlation between abortion and breast cancer, infertility-



ty, mental illness and preterm birth. Also, falsely suggesting a high complication rate associated with abortion, intentionally over estimating a person's gestational age and suggesting that they're beyond the local legal limits for accessing abortion. Using disturbing visuals... You've seen it, I've seen them the sort of like, "Oh, look at this, that pig fetus... isn't that just how how like a human fetus looks like. And would you want to do that to your baby?" Just using like these kinds of visuals to emotionally manipulate and shame pregnant people under the guise of informing or diagnosing them. I was getting at this as the sort of same tactics that you'll see anti-abortion fanatics, like at college campuses try, and the type of ugly signs that they'll bring to the outside of women's clinics that provide abortions or provide any sort of medicine to help with abortion.

I was just talking to the other day, a friend of a friend who had in their own words a headless fetus inside of them, that under stricter abortion laws they will be forced to carry to term or to farther along in the pregnancy. And it was just miraculous and so like a weight lifting off of them, that they actually achieved a schedule and appointment to get that dead body out of them. This was not in Florida for the record, but they were able to do that. And that sort of horrifying traumatic situation is one in which we really need to have access to real clinic entrances, real clinics that actually provide health care and medicine that is science-based, instead of CPCs being basically a wing of the chosen reactionary church of that area. And I'll give them mic up.

**Oso:** Yeah, it's just how Hunter put it, well said. Abortion care is healthcare, it's proper health care. There's a myriad of reasons why anybody could need an abortion, as to simply just not wanting to have a child "in this economy". A lot of people love to joke about but is, unfortunately, a very, very sobering reality for all of us. We cannot live on our own, much less take care of a child. The fact that this FACE Act is being used in the opposite of what it was intended to, which was to protect access to real clinics, and now is being used to protect these vile and predatory CPCs is just a way of snuffing out the pro-choice movement. It's a way of suppressing any type of political movements that would go against the grain and challenge anything, any type of decisions.

The fact that these laws are written so vaguely gives these people, the government, the upper hand to be able to prosecute us in any way possible and just turn the tables on us. Yes, it was created to protect people, but now it is being used to harm us. They're trying to break down our movement, they're scared that we're speaking up, we're standing up and that we're fighting this.

It's not surprising whatsoever. The Democratic Party has never been a friend to oppressed people in this country, or in the world, we all know that. They have done nothing to stop the Dobb's decision, they continue to use the threat of another Republican administration to win votes, even though they never deliver on their promises. They keep saying "if we have a Democratic administration in place we will pass health care reforms, or solidify abortion care and your rights to have



an abortion” and none of that has happened. I’m pretty sure my old email is filled with those ridiculous emails from Nancy Pelosi, where she’s like “I’m furious!” [laughing] It’s like what have you done in all the time to do anything to change this? They’re just hypocrites, the Democrats are just the Republican’s lap dogs, they’re two sides of the same coin.

It’s all just another ploy to suppress movements. We’ve already seen how everything’s been going on in this country. Biden promised to protect trans people during his campaign and now is doing the complete opposite. I don’t know why people are surprised, as if this has not happened time and time again, people don’t seem to learn their lesson and refuse to see the reality of things.

We critique the state, and we are critiquing how the laws are being used against us, but it doesn’t mean that the FACE Act shouldn’t exist. We’re just critiquing the fact that now it’s being used to oppress our comrades and possibly other people across the country. I mean, I honestly wonder if other people have been affected by this, because I’m sure we’re not the only people who have spoken up and stood up against abortion restrictions and whatnot. These laws should be used properly for they were meant to be used for. We don’t think that the FACE Act should be repealed during such a critical time but we just want to highlight how easily the tables can be turned on us, how easily they can just use this to their advantage. Many experts believe the same, that these CPCs should never have qualified for protections under the Health Care Act. The Intercept article definitely referenced several experts and how they all say that this is nonsense, that it’s just very blatant that the CPCs don’t provide anything of substance.

Just because they can give you an ultrasound doesn’t mean anything, anybody could give you an ultrasound as long as they have an ultrasound machine. Does that mean that they’re going to give you a proper diagnosis? No. They’re going to use these pictures and images to scare you, just like how Hunter said, they’re gonna do an ultrasound and say, “Oh, look at that your baby’s already this big!” and it might be false, they could be making stuff up, because I don’t know how to read an ultrasound. For sure I haven’t gone to school to understand, they could just as easily point to any weird shadow on the screen and say, “that’s your baby”. I can’t even imagine what things are transpiring inside of these places.

**Hunter:** Right, because if I may reiterate, they’re not held to the same standards as actual medical clinics are, and they don’t have to hide your privacy information in the way that a real medical clinic would. I wanted to also touch on the fact that the CPCs [crisis pregnancy centers], comparatively, were not a thing back when the FACE Act passed. They have multiplied and grown in numbers since then, due to a lot of Republican funding and a lot of right wing organizing that has proliferated out of these connections between different far right groups that are trying to break down the separation of church and state. Exactly this type of propaganda.

Just right now something similar that’s happening is the [domestic] terrorism charges passed in Georgia. So in 2015, Dylann, Roof, a white supremacist who



was seen waving the Confederate flag on his social media, who was seen clearly having racial bias and being racist on his social media. Surprise! He committed a mass shooting at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston. And after that happened, this was around eight years ago, the neighboring state of Georgia passed terrorism laws that under which he, I believe, might have been officially charged as a terrorist. And those same policies today are the ones being used by the government of Atlanta to accuse forest defenders of part of the Stop Cop City movement to defend the Weelaunee forest, the Atlanta forest. And prevent the building of a Cop City of gigantic urban warfare training ground in the middle of a Black neighborhood. They're trying to charge activists, climate activists, as terrorists using a law that was passed to be harsh on white supremacists. Anytime that a law is passed, that might supposedly be used to help progress into a better world... that law can still and, honestly, will still be used by reactionaries to hurt the people that it ostensibly is meant to protect.

**TFSR:** Yeah, for sure. I guess that's definitely a danger when passing legislation in that sort of way.

**One thing that I'd like clarification on as far as you all are aware — based on the indictments of the folks in South Florida — is the federal government making the argument that there's a connection between the graffiti that those two folks are being accused of doing, and the acts of vandalism that have been claimed under the name "Jane's Revenge" since May of 2022, at CPCs, and other spots that promote anti abortion ideology and action in different parts of the US? Are they making that claim? Or is there reason to think that they're going to be making that claim in court?**

**Oso:** We can't elaborate too much on that part but we can say with confidence that prosecutors don't have much to stand on, as these charges are clearly inflated and pretty much bogus given the circumstances.

Whether they are trying to connect this with "Jane's Revenge" or any other instances, we don't know and don't want to elaborate on that, as we don't have too much information on that at the moment.

**Hunter:** While we don't wish to elaborate too much on the charges being placed against friends. I do want to sort of paraphrase an excerpt from the south Florida Anti Repression Committee's website: 'both the state of Florida and Heartbeat of Miami, Christian pregnancy centers that ties a lot of right wing activity in Miami together, have filed separate lawsuits against all four co-defendants, and numerous "Jane Does".' They basically asked to speak to the manager of Jane's Revenge, in order to try and basically just stack on even more lawsuits, possible charges and threats against our friends who are being repressed. The two suits basically are a legal tactic that the acronym for is SLAPP, strategic lawsuits against public participation. They're using SLAPP tactic to basically put an extra set of pressure on the



private legal side against co defendants.

The initial wording for those lawsuits was thrown out by the judge who, I guess, figured that the state of Florida or the Heartbeat of Miami just cast the net way too wide against these people. But it's still something that's there to try and scare them out into inaction. And we're not getting scared into inaction.

**TFSR: I guess the fear being that institutions that have a lot of money and therefore access to lawyers can just bury people under legal challenges to the point that they get so wrapped up in trying to defend themselves that they can't do much of anything else, or maybe get bankrupted. Is that the idea?**

**Hunter:** Exactly.

**TFSR: You've mentioned Caleb and Amber's — two people that were indicted first up — and you've also mentioned that there's two other people.**

**I wonder if you could tell a little bit about the sort of people that they are, what do you want people in the audience to understand about the people that you're asking them to give support to?**

**Oso:** Yeah, our comrades, all four of them, are people who are just absolutely amazing. They stick by their values, they are not afraid to stand up for what's right. They know what side of justice they need to stand on. They know what's happening to them is wrong. They have always been there for the community, always constantly doing everything, spending their time outside of work, every waking moment outside of work, engaging in some sort of activism and just pouring their hearts out into mutual aid activism, whatnot.

The fact that they're all facing this is absolutely tragic, their lives have been absolutely uprooted and just turned upside down. One of them lost their jobs, had to move out — we mention this in the press releases — their children were interrogated and intimidated by law enforcement officers and federal agents, and just committing these no knock warrants with such aggressive tactics of flashbangs on an apartment building. Absolutely unnecessarily aggressive tactics, and it's all just psychological warfare that they've been playing with, in terms of cutting their means of communication down, controlling who they can and cannot speak to. Just so much. It's very obvious that they're just trying to break them down from the people that they are. It's so obvious, these aggressive tactics are desperate measures because they know we're not about to back down easily. These people are absolutely the people who will never be backing down no matter what, they're going to be fighting till the end, no matter what it is, no matter with who, or what, when, where.

These people deserve every single bit of support, because they have given their whole lives and dedicated their whole lives and will continue to do so after all this is said and done. This is not the end, this is not going to scare us into in-



timidation, whatsoever. So, they deserve all the support from the community so everybody needs to know just how much they've been doing down here in South Florida.

**Hunter:** When I think of Caleb and Amber and our other two friends who I'm not sure if we're naming right now, I think about the herbal recipes that they've shared with me because of how into gardening these friends are. And I think of the little plants that some of them have often gifted, or that I've seen them watch from being little sprouts to having a nice little garden...

**Oso:** Or the zines they give us about what we can plant down here, what's easy to plant in our backyards. Just wonderful little things. I'm sorry to interject but last time I saw Caleb he gave me a zine on what plants and herbs you can grow right in your backyard with minimal effort. He gave me some of his fresh oregano that he was propagating. And that's just the type of people they are. I'm sorry to interrupt Hunter.

**Hunter:** They're the first group of people I think of down in Miami who have trans rights in mind. Everybody involved in this is queer and, save for Caleb, everybody involved in this is a brown femme. But when I see that there was some reactionaries showing against like the LGBT community down in South Florida, these comrades are at the forefront of the counter protests. They're at the forefront of people who are there to stand against homophobia and transphobia, which both of which are just masks over misogyny. These folks are out there supporting the most oppressed because they have, some of them, come from the most oppressed communities.

And outside of just like these four friends, there are also a wave of people who, when we're talking about that no-contact list that they were given, which includes names aren't known to the defendants, they might have just been people who were at the wrong place at the wrong time. I spoke to a kid who was pretty sure the reason they're on that list is because they might not have known our comrades at all, but they were arrested at the same location as them. And so the state is really trying to pull a bit big wide dragnet and really reaching to connect dots that just aren't there. To try and say that these folks are a bigger danger, bigger threat. When they're really just gardeners, and people with a lot of love in their hearts.

**Oso:** Quite literally gardeners, some of the most wonderful people I've met. They have welcomed me into their lives. I get a little emotional thinking about everything that's happened to them because they are more than just comrades, they are very, very, very special friends who have helped me through some incredibly hard times. The fact that they're just being dealt with this much injustice after all that they've done for the community, because they're always the first ones to be jumping up and arranging any type of demonstration, something happens and they wanna do something, they want to go out there, they want to spread the word. They've just



done so much so much and they don't deserve this, at all.

They they would do what we're doing for them in a heartbeat, for anybody else. Even if it wasn't anybody super close with, they would just also try to be as aggressively involved with helping them as much as we are. And those are the type of people that they are, they always have everyone on their minds. They have so much love in their hearts as well for everyone, for the earth, for the people around them. And I don't think I could sing their praises enough, truthfully, this is just being completely honest, and my experience with them, just wonderful people in general.

**TFSR: Awesome. Thank you for sharing that. Can you talk about the condition that the four folks are being kept in right now? You've talked about no-contact lists, are the folks involved still being held in custody? Or have they been allowed to return home? What does that look like? What are their immediate needs as the state starts making its case, and as they start building up their defense,**

**Hunter:** Thankfully, all four of them are safe and out of custody at the moment, all them have spent some time in jail. Surprisingly, after being raided or having spent some time, one of the comrades was able to arrange with their lawyer to go up to where the case stems from, up in the I think they call it the Middle Judicial District District of Florida in Tampa, where the case originates from and just signed some required paperwork with their lawyers present and avoided sitting in jail. But that the cost of having a lawyer that would help out with that was in the \$1000's out of pocket.

Currently, all four of them cannot speak to each other. And one of our friends who whose family home was raided, had to move to get away from the traumatic experience that happened at her home but also to be able to afford things in this current situation and having to relocate to stay with family for support. Meanwhile, another one of the indicted folks initially had their spouse included in the no-contact list! Thankfully the court overruled that.

**Oso:** So thankfully they are free, as Hunter mentioned. The no contact lists have been very much a detriment to them, they miss speaking to all the people that they cannot speak to. Their families have been affected. It has put quite a strain on their families, especially with our comrade who was asked to move out of the Southern District into the Middle District after their recent indictment. They had to leave everything behind. Thankfully they have family up there they can stay with. But with having to leave their child behind and knowing that their child is stressed out, with having to deal with the fallout of everything. They [the child] have been interrogated and told some very vile things by the federal agents who have been grinding into them. and from what I have been told, with such intense questions that I believe should not be asked to miners who have no connection to anything other than the fact that they are related to a comrade.



They're not going to know a lick of anything regarding the activism that goes behind the scenes and whatnot. And they even tried to entice them to dish out more information by saying, "Oh, you can use the \$25,000 reward to go to college". That's so predatory. They clearly see these children are poor, they're lower income kids, and using that type of tactic on a child is so low, so disgusting.

Obviously I don't put it past the FBI to do these things, but from what I have heard, they're having a very hard time. Our other comrades feel lonely. It's a lot. While they're not being held in custody it's still a lot to deal with. How do you navigate a life when you have these charges on you? How do you get a job? You have a pretrial officer to be reporting to, every movement they make is checked. They can't go anywhere without prior permission, they have curfews. It's a lot of control. While they're not in custody it's still nightmarish, what they're having to go through and isolating. Part of the psychological warfare that's being waged, it's more than just you have looming fear of the 12 years over you, it's also this constant thing day in and day out, that is just eating away at them. And while they're trying their best to be strong, it's going to take some sort of toll.

This is not anything any normal human being has ever prepared to take on emotionally, mentally, physically. Having your belongings gone through and taken. Everything being turned inside out, everything being left a mess, they don't care what they did. I saw, I will not name who, but I did see the aftermath of one of the raids. It was disgusting, it was just dehumanizing. Just the way [law enforcement] left everything, absolute zero regard. They weren't exactly even searching for anything in particular, I feel. Maybe they were, maybe they weren't, but they did very much take great joy in leaving everything a disaster. Just a path of destruction in their wake. Which is something they're very, very good at and what they're essentially trained to do, basically. So you can just already imagine all those things compounded can do to a person.

**TFSR: Yeah, for sure. There's a reason that the majority of people that have federal charges end up taking plea deals. It's not necessarily because somebody is guilty of a thing, but because they don't have the resources, or the stamina, or whatever, to be able to fight it. And oftentimes it's because they don't have the community behind them to help them do that, or the support to get the legal defense that would allow them to.**

**On that note, I know that there's a fundraiser that the South Florida Anti-Repression Committee is helping to run on ActBlue. Can you talk about that a little bit and maybe give folks the link to it?**

**Oso:** Yeah, so we've partnered with ActBlue. I don't know if this would honestly be okay to mention or not, Andy Ngo has been one of the people who has attempted to harass, through social media, our comrades, when the initial news of the first indictments came out. He has been trying to say that ActBlue is some terrible organization...I don't know, some jokes this crackpot has.



But we've partnered with them, and what I believe is a reproductive Legal Defense Fund, and they're helping us raise money to pay for all legal expenses which is going to be costly. Thank goodness our comrades are in the best hands, but that's still going to cost money. We want to be able to pay all that back or pay whatever hasn't been paid. We have to bring in expert witnesses to give their points of view on the absurdity of these charges and help build our case and win this case. And it's just going to take a lot and any little bit helps. We want to put this out there. We want everyone to know that this is a fight for everyone and not just here in South Florida.

**Hunter:** The link is [secure.actblue.com/donate/fllegaldefense](https://secure.actblue.com/donate/fllegaldefense), no spaces or under lines

**TFSR: What's the Linktree link though?**

**Hunter:** [LinkTr.EE/SFL\\_ARC](https://linktr.ee/SFL_ARC)

**Oso:** You'll be able to find our blog with all of our press releases, all of our social media, where we'll be constantly updating and giving periodic updates on everything. We're both on Twitter and Instagram at the moment. So give those a follow, keep up today. Retweet, retweet retweet. Posts on your stories, send it to everybody, even if you think they might not care, they should. Because this is just setting a precedent for any future indictments. We want people to know that this is how far they're willing to go to stop us in our tracks. This is what they've resorted to in regards to abortion rights and reproductive rights. If we let it sit it's just gonna keep getting worse.

We saw what happened last week in Tallahassee, Nikki Fried and Lauren Book got arrested for civil disobedience. They are people who have been running for governor and just have held office here, and they were arrested at the Capitol. Absolutely outrageous stuff happening because they were protesting the six week ban being passed. It's just going to keep happening, it's going to keep getting worse and they're not going to care. They're going to send the hounds on us and we need to be very, very, very mindful of what's happening.

**Hunter:** Every legal case sets a precedent, the one here in South Florida is setting up a lot of precedence if the reactionaries get their way.

Before delving into that I want to also give a little context to what Oso was talking about in Tallahassee where several pro choice activists were arrested, along with Nikki Fried and another politicians, because they were denied a right to peacefully protest within a certain distance from the building. It reminded me of a buzzword that I would hear a lot during the 2016 election cycle, "free speech zones." So apparently, you're allowed to exercise the First Amendment, but you have to do it over in that corralled area. You can't do it just anywhere near to and outside a public



government or facility . And that was a violation of their First Amendment rights.

And the precedent is being set, in this case in particular down here in South Florida... We've talked about how CPCs have previously not been considered actual medical centers because they are not regulated like medical centers... 12 years for graffiti when not a punch has been thrown not not a glass has been cracked. I can't imagine how many graffiti artists out there, how many street painters aren't artists there are out there who will be decimated to hear that suddenly they're starting to charge people for the mere act of spray painting something allegedly to with 12 years in federal prison.

I've never gone to a sort of like community defense situation where folks are doing clinic escort, but I do know a lot of clinic escorts. And when they talk of the reactionaries who protest abortion clinics, they are intimately familiar with the FACE Act. And the reactionaries, the anti abortion extremists, the abortion abolitionists (I think is a term that they call themselves) they fundraise specifically to commit crimes that go against FACE, blocking clinic entrances or intimidating people right there. And so many of them will get away with it. Far right activists have tried telling the DeSantis "Hey, the government doesn't apply this to left wing protesters as much, this FACE Act." And they still celebrate the idea that not enough is being done to charge progressive activists with this law.

**TFSR: So we've brought up a couple of ways that people in the audience can support the folks who are being tried in this specific case, and also the precedent setting nature of this and how it impacts all of us, really. We talked about the case, we mentioned the legal defense website to make donations, and there was the discussion of expert witnesses being brought in. I think it was said earlier, off mic, that the Civil Liberties Defense Center is helping in the legal defense here, which is great. Are you looking for more lawyers? Are you looking for those sorts of expert witnesses, and are there any other sorts of legal support, besides sending money, that folks can try to provide?**

**Oso:** As far as we are aware, lawyer wise, we should be okay. The last comrade to be indicted, who is now in Tampa in the Middle District, has been having issues with securing a proper lawyer for this case. So any helps with that, or just any other resources. If we are in need of any additional resources, we are likely to reach out, that'll be posted on the press release pages or on social medias. Keeping an eye out on those pages would help a lot. As much as I hate to admit it, at least at this point of time in our civilization, money does make the world turn, so any type of help, any little bit will help.

In these times, where our identities are being attacked and our rights are being taken away, stripped away, one by one, more aggressively each day than the other, just reach out to your local affinity groups. Organize, organize, organize. Don't be afraid, don't let these situations, these cases, scare you into hiding and to staying quiet. Because that's what they want. We're stronger together. We always



will be. That's why we want to bring as much awareness as we can, we are stronger with numbers. We want to show our comrades that they have the support, that they have many, many people rallying behind them as well.

**TFSR: Yeah, that makes sense. And it seems like for the broader communities that are most deeply impacted by the legislation and by the executive orders, and by the threatening activities of far right activists, showing up and if you can, if you have the ability, putting yourself out there in support. Doing mutual aid. Getting yourself more educated, and engaging around issues of bodily autonomy and supporting queer communities and queer life. It's all connected, and you make those connections and build stronger movement that way, right?**

**Hunter:** Yeah, become governable!

Those of us and marginalized communities, queer people, minority groups, we've been around since before all these repressive laws were ever put into place. And we're going to be around long after they cease to exist. And support our communities through that sort of mutual aid and communal support. That's how we stay strong.

**TFSR: Well, Oso and Hunter, thank you so much for having this conversation. I really appreciate you taking the time to do this. And I'm sorry for the pressure that you and your communities are under, down in South Florida. But yeah, solidarity from North Carolina. Yeah. We're gonna beat this.**

**Hunter:** Hell yeah, we are.

**Oso:** We are! Hell yeah we are. And nobody can take away our solidarity, our bonds. And I just want everyone to know that we're sticking through this till the end, forever and ever. So thank you. Thank you so much for having us. This was wonderful. I hope this reaches a lot of people. And thank you to everyone who is listening, and hope that this shed a lot of light on the situation.

**Hunter:** Hey, shout out to Daniel Baker's case and other Floridian who's been federally repressed and currently under close custody. Solidarity with all political prisoners. And thank you so much, Bursts, for helping us out here.

**TFSR: Yeah, it's my pleasure.**



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